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Dear House Committee on Housing and Human Services,

I am writing to acknowledge my support for HB 2508 which requires DHS to award grants to refugee resettlement agencies to provide services to refugees arriving in Oregon. I am hopeful that you will consider supporting this important bill as well.

I am a member of St. Ignatius parish and have been involved with its immigration committee which has played an important role in embracing the Tibbetts House Refugee Ministry in conjunction with Catholic Charities of Oregon. The latter organization has a long-standing history in Oregon of providing temporary housing for newly arriving refugees. Over the last two years, resettlement programs have struggled to provide necessary services and case management to newly arriving refugees while the federal government cuts funding and support for refugee services.

In addition to loss of federal funds, the current housing crisis in Oregon has added to the struggle by resettlement agencies to secure affordable housing for refugee families hoping to start a new life in Oregon. HB 2508 could provide much needed relief to these organizations by acknowledging the emergency the federal government has created, and by providing access to funds needed to support families adjusting to their new life in Oregon.

Thank you for your compassionate consideration of supporting HB 2508.

Sincerely,

Catherine A. Elia  
Parishioner at St. Ignatius Catholic Church, Portland